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Statement of Mike Mansfield for the Montana Democrat

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

FOR THE

MONTANA DEMOCRAT

APRIL, 1970

Montanans confront much the same perplexities which face the nation as a whole. Continued inflation, high interest rates are unabated here and throughout the country. Our unemployment problem is twice as bad as the average. Government costs are up with the cost of living and the people are getting less and less in return because of the inflation.

The key drag on this nation is the interminable war in Viet Nam. It has already drained more than \$100 billion into Southeast Asia, not to speak of the tragic loss of about 50,000 young Americans killed and more than 250,000 wounded. To be sure these totals have been rising at a lower rate since the President made his turn-around decision to reduce the commitment in Viet Nam. Nevertheless, several hundred more names are added to the casualty lists each week.

Our responsibility in the Congress is to stay with this problem. We must work, together with the President to clamp the lid down on a deeper involvement and to bring this conflict to a close as rapidly as possible.

There is also a mountain of problems at home, which have been accumulating while our attention has been on Viet Nam. Education, for example, cries out for more attention. Crime rates continue to rise throughout the nation. Interest costs are at the highest levels in a hundred years. They are forcing many small businessmen and farmers to the wall and have put

home ownership beyond the reach of most Americans. The whole range of public services, whether it is postal deliveries, health care or whatever, stands in need of improvement.

In spite of many difficulties, our State is still one of the finest places to live on this Continent. But as Montanans we are face-to-face with some critical decisions. We have great resources which can be used for the further benefit of our people. We need industry for this and other purposes and the payrolls which come with it. The great recreational potential of our State can also be made to yield substantial additional income to our people.

To be sure, economic development is not without its drawbacks. Pollution is too often the not-so-silent partner of economic progress. The sudden influx of people which is brought about by the establishment of a new industry can weigh down the public services and produce uncomfortable pressures in any community.

It is not surprising that many of our people would like to see Montana remain exactly as it is. There are those who appreciate the State for its isolation and natural beauty. I am frank to admit that I am inclined personally in that direction. Nevertheless, growth and adjustment are inevitable if we are to maintain the services required by the people in the 70's. It will have to come if there is to be sufficient opportunities for the young people of the State.

I have every confidence in the capacity of our citizenry to bring about an orderly economic development without destroying the fundamental character of the State. It is partly a question of enlightened political leadership. I urge Democrats to work to provide that kind of leadership for Montana. That is the critical calling of the 1970's. An affirmative response to it is our highest trust as a political party.